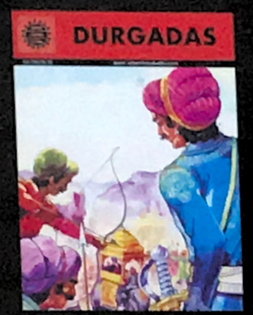
BENI MADHO AND PIR ALI

It was a time of turbulence when resentment against British treachery and betrayal was simmering in the people of India. The Nawab of Avadh had been a staunch ally of the British, providing them with money, grain and cattle. And yet, Avadh was annexed through the Doctrine of Lapse as were other states like Satara, Sambalpur, Nagpur and Jhansi. The discontent triggered off the first war of Indian Independence. Rana Beni Madho and Pir Ali were two heroes of that period who inspired many to stand up against injustice.

OTHER ACK BRAVEHEARTS:



ALSO LOOK FOR:

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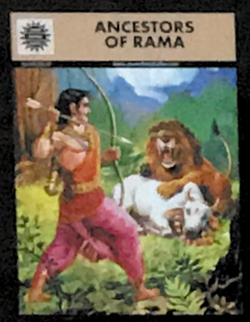
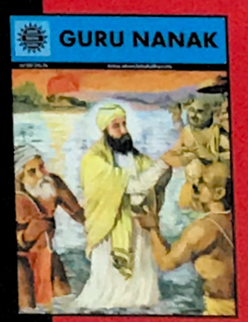


INDIAN CLASSICS

FABLES & HUMOUR



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BRAVEHEARTS

BENI MADHO AND PIR ALI

HEROES OF 1857

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BENI MADHO

ONE MORNING IN MAY 1857, OUTSIDE THE FORT OF SHANKARPUR, IN AVADH—

NO! NO! A HUNDRED TIMES, NO! I WON'T GRAZE PIGS AND SHEEP! NEVER!

YOU'LL HAVE TO!

YOU WERE BORN A PASI! BORN FOR SUCH JOBS! WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO, HEERA?

I... I WILL...

...JOIN THE ARMY OF RANA BENI MADHO. HE NEEDS SOLDIERS.

AAHAHA! WELL SAID MY GALLANT WARRIOR!

AS IF THE RANA WOULD CARE FOR THE LIKES OF YOU! THE ARMY OF PASIS...

STOP IT! I'LL GO TO THE RANA THIS MINUTE!

WAIT, YOUNG MAN. HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'LL BE ENLISTED? HAVE YOU EVER FOUGHT IN A BATTLE?

N-NO.

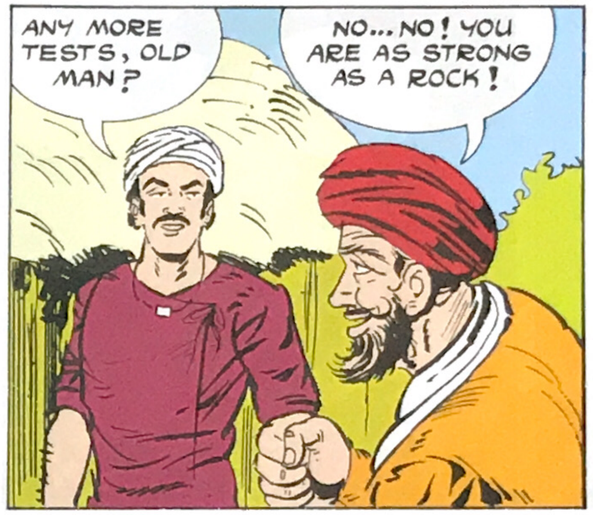
FIGHTING BATTLES IS NOT CHILD'S PLAY, MY BOY.
NONSENSE! I KNOW I CAN FIGHT! I AM AS TOUGH AS THEY COME.

IS THAT SO? LET'S FIND OUT. LOOK...

...I AM AN OLD MAN. YOU ARE YOUNG AND HEALTHY. LET ME SEE, IF YOU CAN TAKE A BLOW FROM ME.
OF COURSE, I CAN.

BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO FACE ONE OF MINE AFTERWARDS!
ALL RIGHT.

READY?
GO AHEAD!

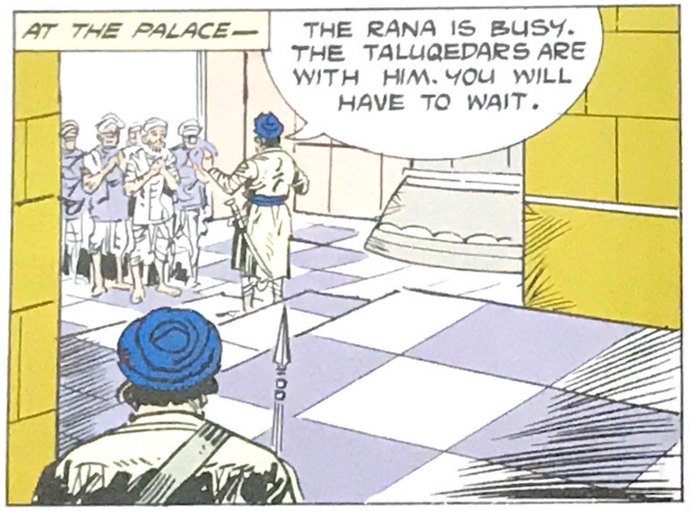

ANY MORE TESTS, OLD MAN?
NO... NO! YOU ARE AS STRONG AS A ROCK!

AND NOW IT'S MY TURN. PREPARE YOURSELF, STRANGER!
WAIT A MOMENT, SON!

NOW TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT WHAT I CAN DO!

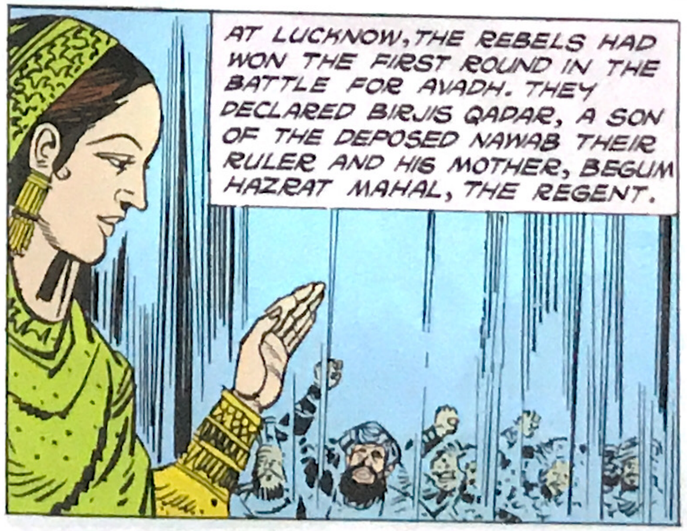
WHAT'S KEEPING YOU, YOUNG MAN? COME ON! LET'S SEE HOW HARD YOU CAN HIT!
IF YOU INSIST, SIR.

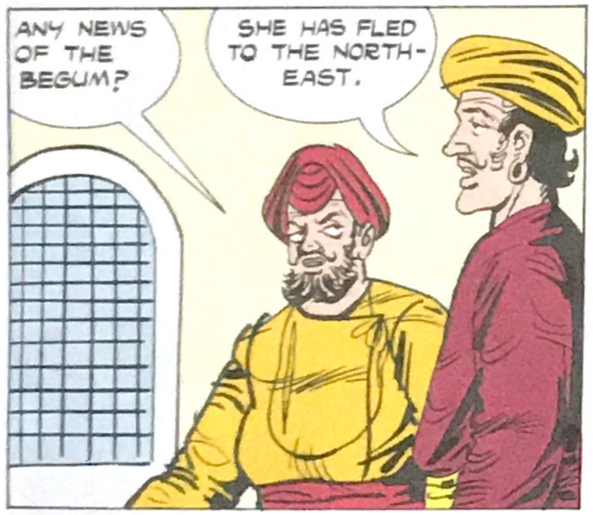
OW! IT'S AGES SINCE I WAS DEALT SUCH A BLOW.

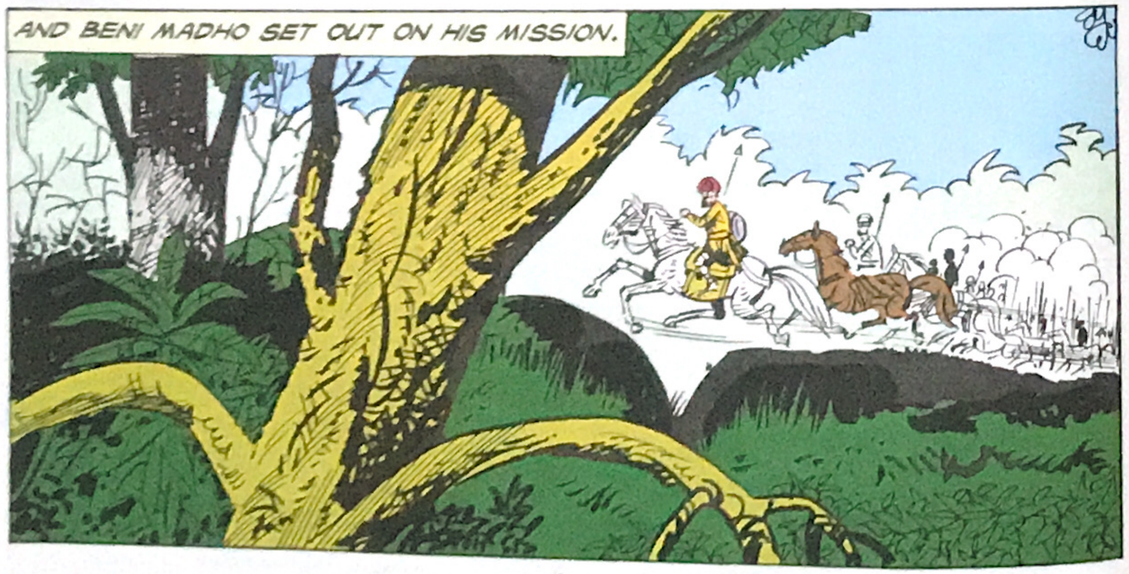


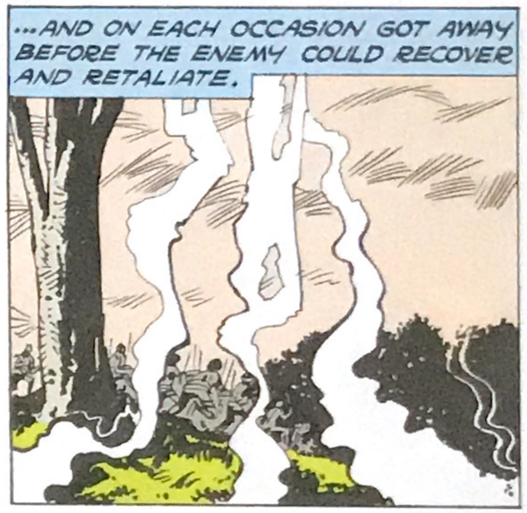
*FOR DETAILS SEE INTRODUCTION

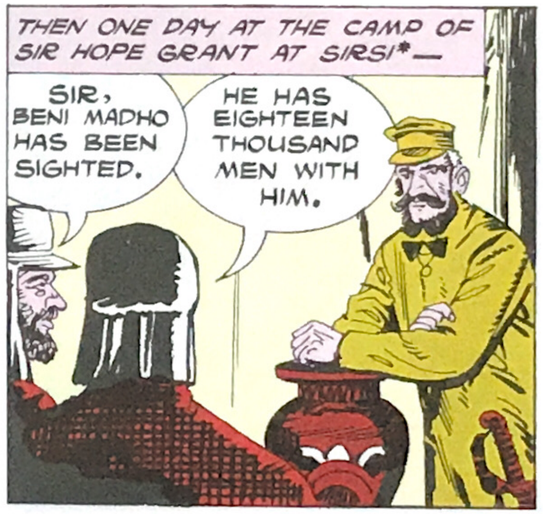
* OF 1857 + CAPITAL OF AVADH
@ OFFICE AND LIVING QUARTERS OF THE BRITISH RESIDENT

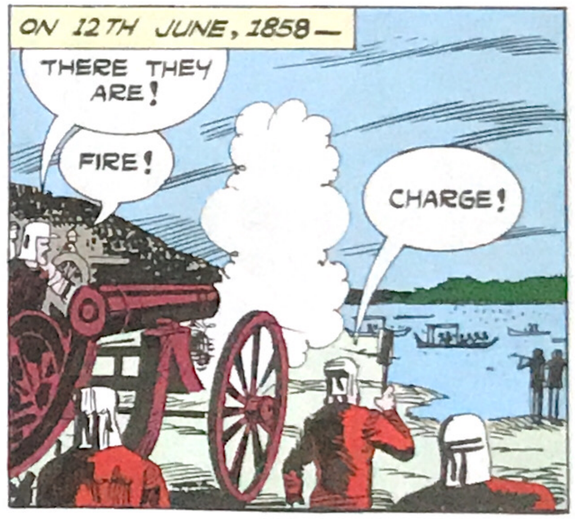


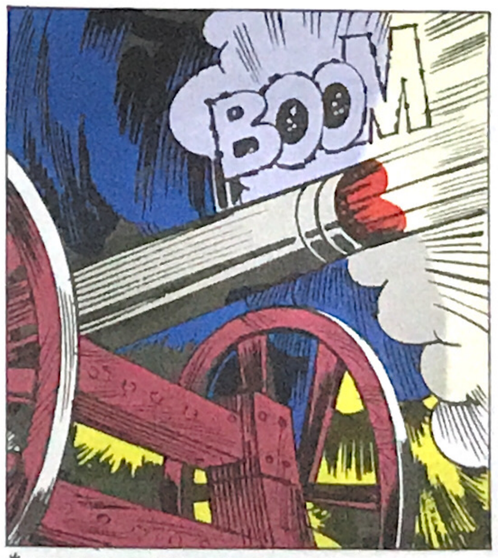


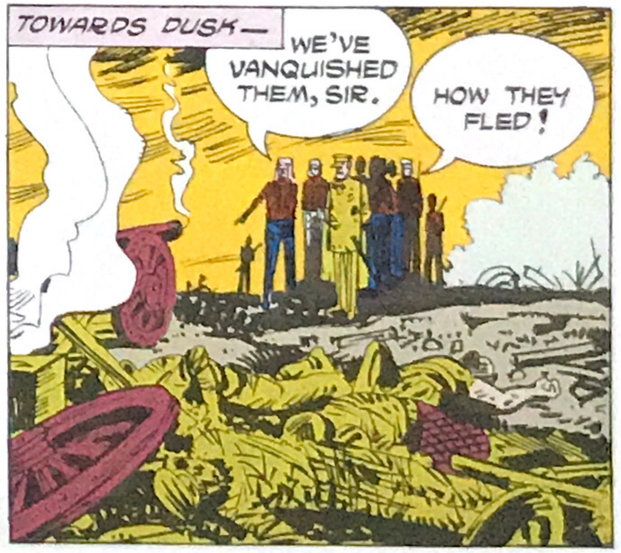




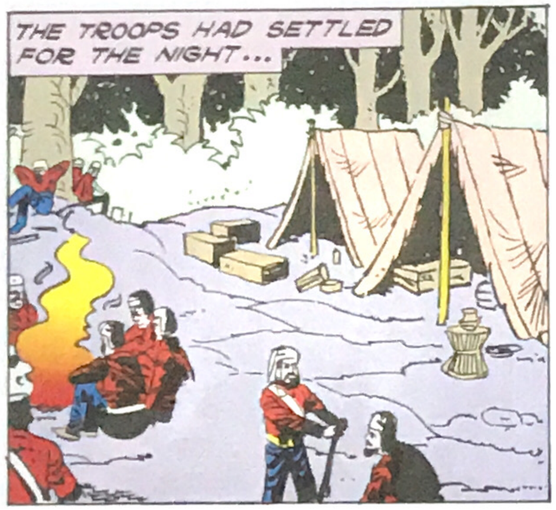


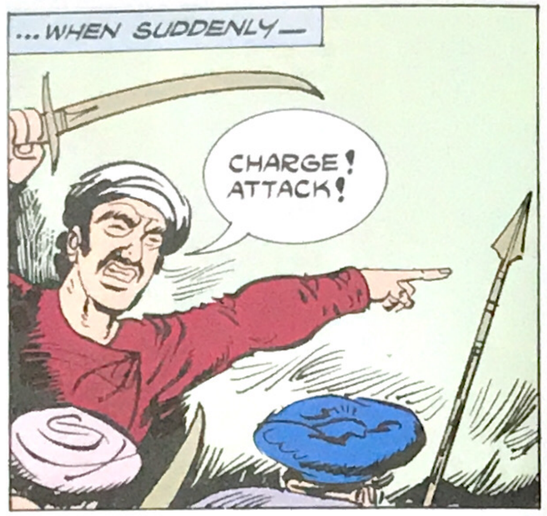






* 30 KM FROM LUCKNOW


THE TROOPS HAD SETTLED FOR THE NIGHT...


...WHEN SUDDENLY—
CHARGE! ATTACK!

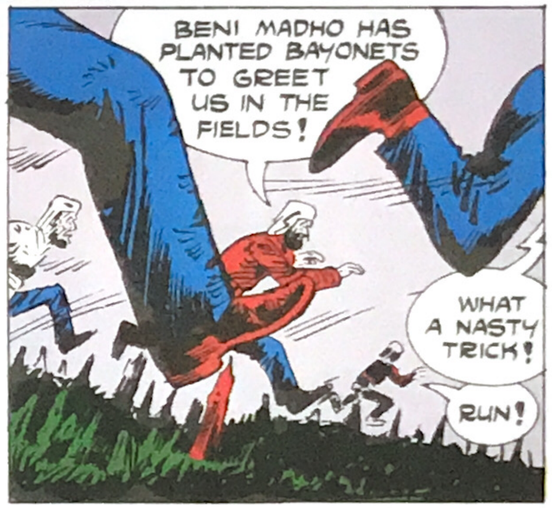
LORD ALMIGHTY! WHAT'S THIS?
RUN! BENI MADHO HAS COME. RUN!

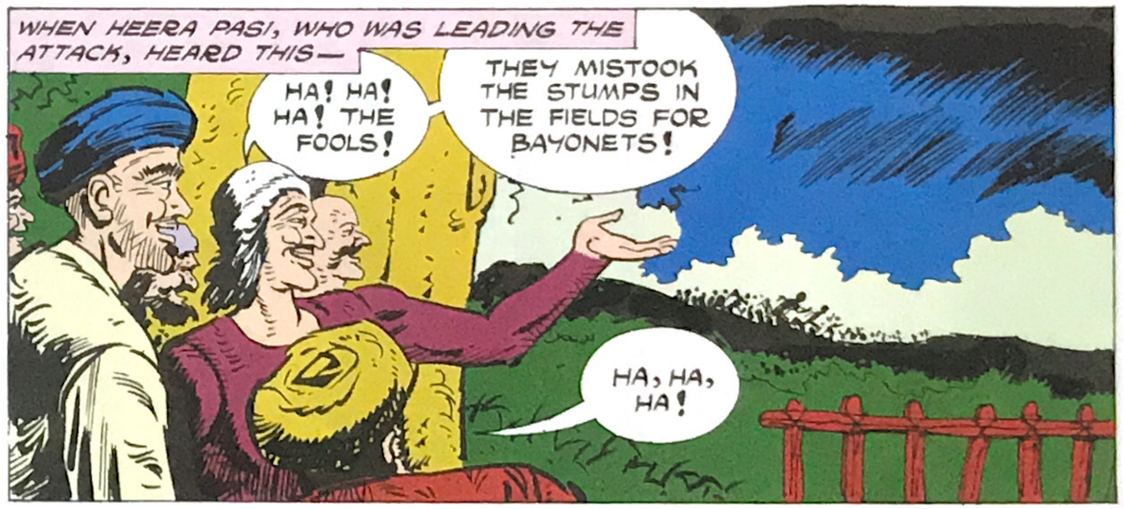
AS IF WE'LL LET YOU GET AWAY! TAKE THIS!

TO THE FIELDS!

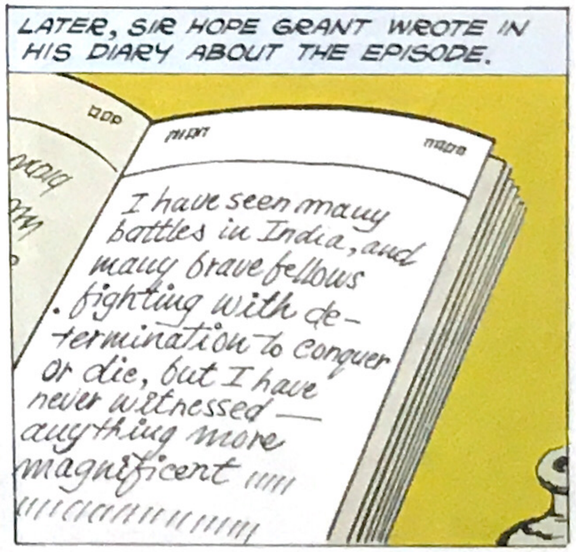
BUT SOON, SHRILL CRIES OF ANGUISH RENT THE SILENT NIGHT.
EEEIIE!
WHAT THE HELL... OOOH!

OOO...A... AAH!
SANGEEN*! SANGEEN*!
BAYONETS?!

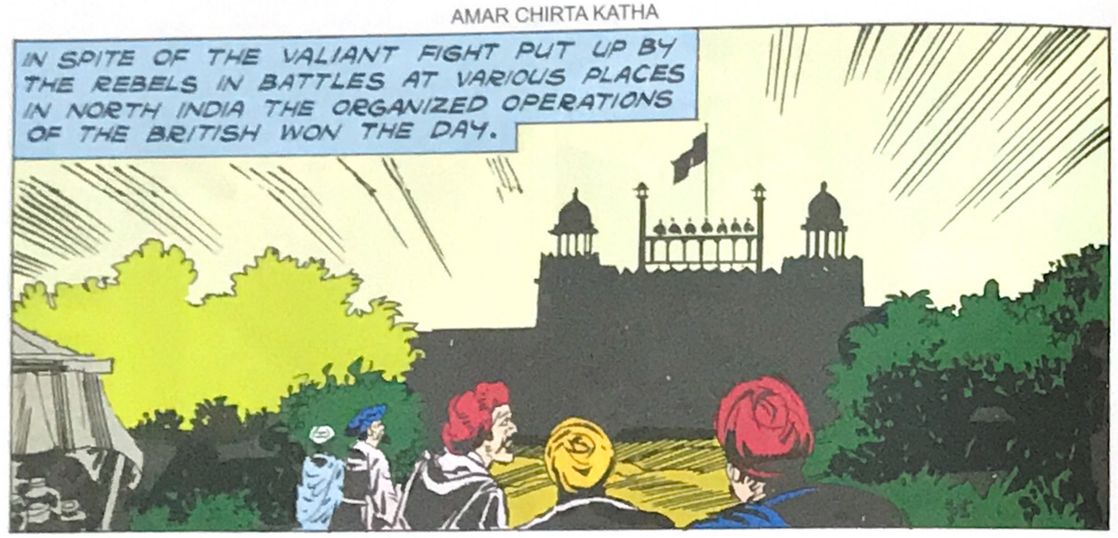

BENI MADHO HAS PLANTED BAYONETS TO GREET US IN THE FIELDS!
WHAT A NASTY TRICK!
RUN!


WHEN HEERA PASI, WHO WAS LEADING THE ATTACK, HEARD THIS—
HA! HA! HA! THE FOOLS!
THEY MISTOOK THE STUMPS IN THE FIELDS FOR BAYONETS!
HA, HA, HA!

WATCH THEM RUN!


LATER, SIR HOPE GRANT WROTE IN HIS DIARY ABOUT THE EPISODE.
I have seen many battles in India, and many brave fellows fighting with determination to conquer or die, but I have never witnessed — anything more magnificent

* BAYONETS

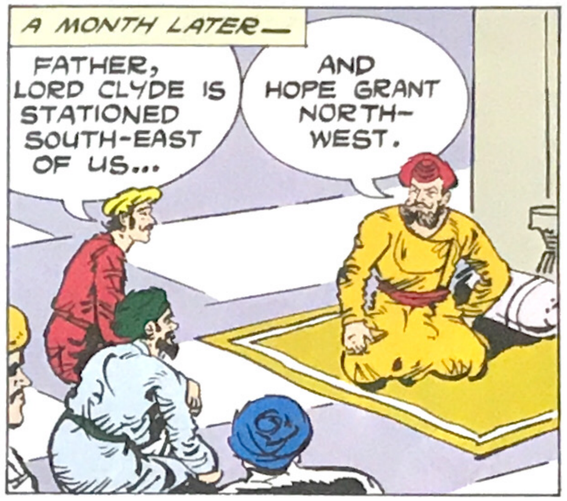

IN SPITE OF THE VALIANT FIGHT PUT UP BY THE REBELS IN BATTLES AT VARIOUS PLACES IN NORTH INDIA THE ORGANIZED OPERATIONS OF THE BRITISH WON THE DAY.

AT SHANKARPUR—
THE BRITISH QUELLED THE REBELLION BY THREATS, BRIBES AND MILITARY ACTION.

THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED THIS TIME. BUT WILL THEY SUCCEED IN REBELLIONS YET TO COME?

WHAT DO WE DO, FATHER?
NEED YOU ASK?

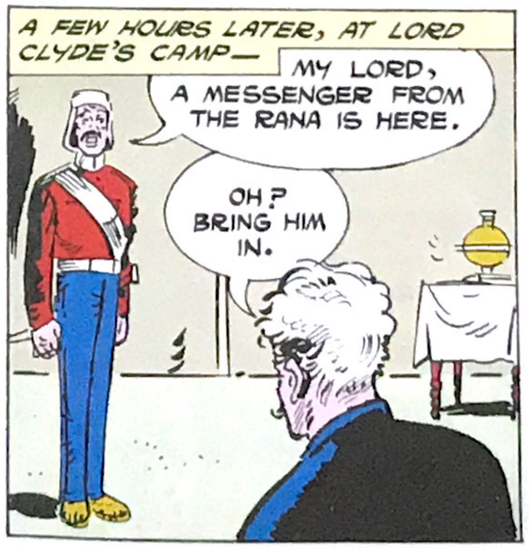
WE CONTINUE THE FIGHT, TO THE FINISH!


A MONTH LATER—
FATHER, LORD CLYDE IS STATIONED SOUTH-EAST OF US...
AND HOPE GRANT NORTH-WEST.

MY DEAR RAGHU, I HAVE NO INTENTION OF FIGHTING THIS TIME.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, FATHER?
WHY SHOULD WE LOSE LIVES UNNECESSARILY? AND RUIN OUR FORT?
ARE WE, THEN, GOING TO GIVE UP?

NO! NEVER! BUT...


A FEW HOURS LATER, AT LORD CLYDE'S CAMP—
MY LORD, A MESSENGER FROM THE RANA IS HERE.
OH? BRING HIM IN.

HUZOOR, I COME WITH A LETTER FROM RAGHURAJ SINGH, THE SON OF RANA BENI MADHO.

राम ब्रह्म व्यापक जगजाना।
परमानंद परेस पुराना॥

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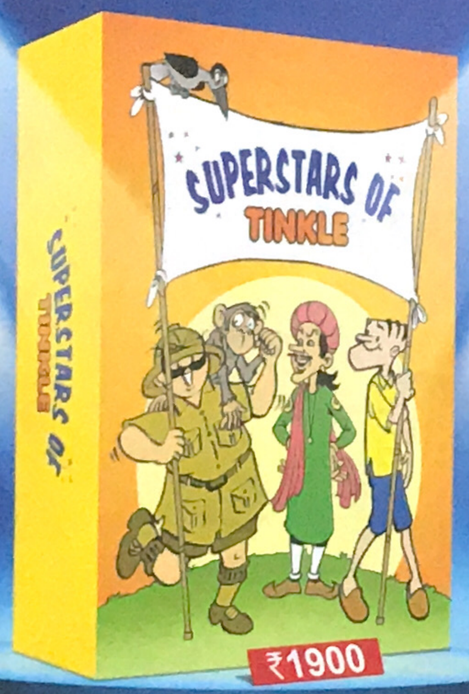

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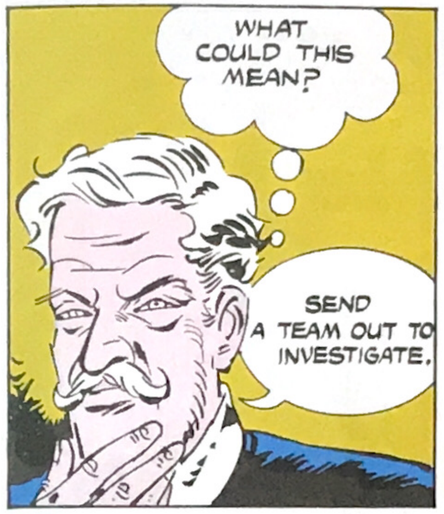
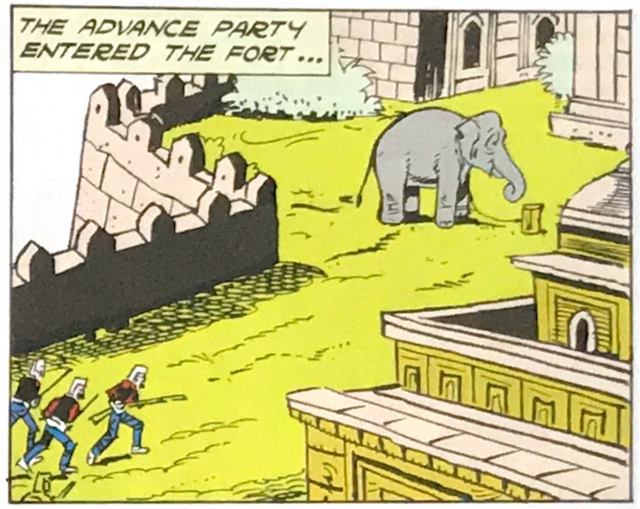
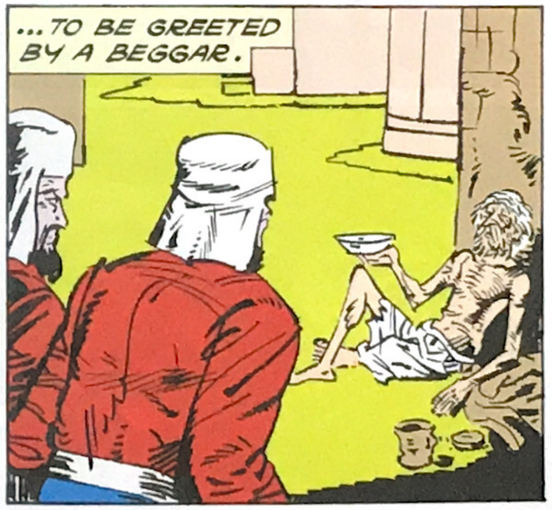
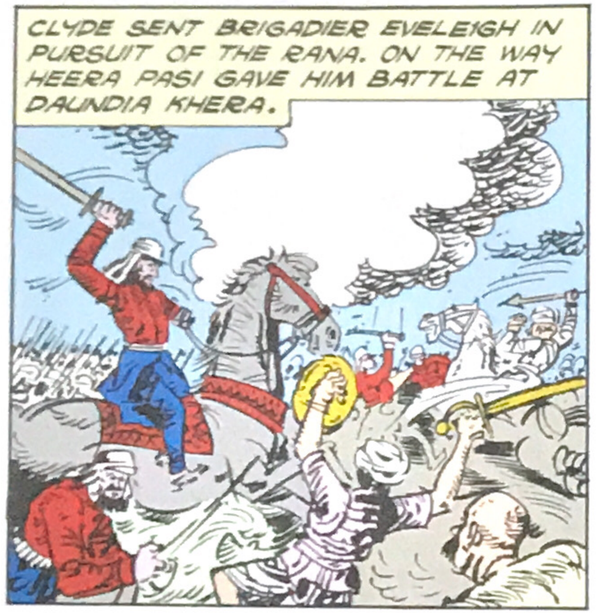


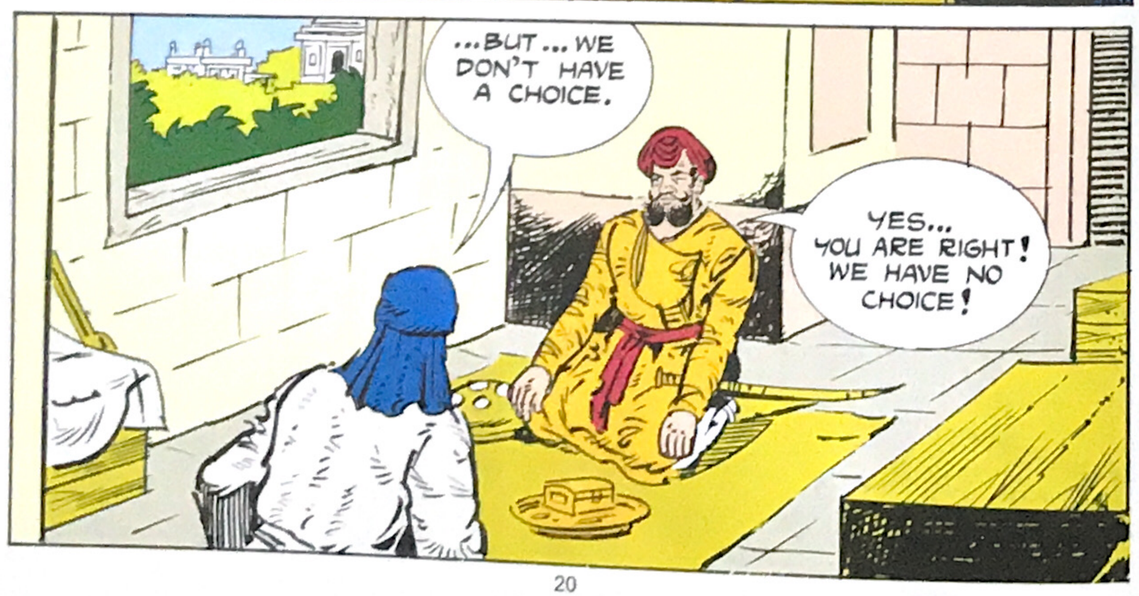


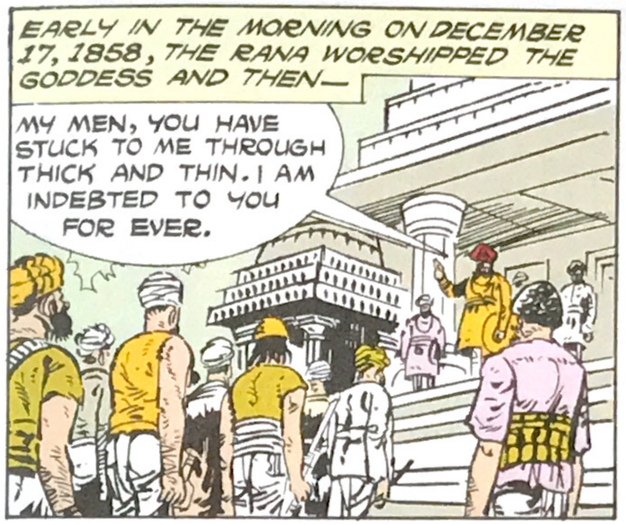



CLYDE SENT BRIGADIER EVELEIGH IN PURSUIT OF THE RANA. ON THE WAY HEERA PASI GAVE HIM BATTLE AT DAUNDIA KHERA.

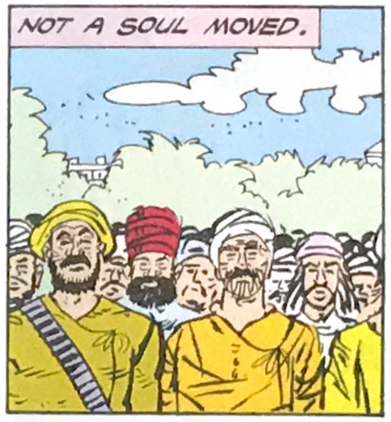
EVELEIGH HEADED TOWARDS PORAI, WHERE LATER A CONTINGENT SENT BY LORD CLYDE MET HIM.
SIR, THE RANA IS AT BHEERA GOVINDPUR.
WE'LL CATCH THE ROGUE THERE!

MEANWHILE AT BHEERA GOVINDPUR—
CHANDRIKA SINGH, I DISLIKE FIGHTING NEAR A TOWN. I CAN'T BEAR THE AGONIES THIS BRINGS TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN.
I KNOW, SIR...


...BUT... WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.
YES... YOU ARE RIGHT! WE HAVE NO CHOICE!


EARLY IN THE MORNING ON DECEMBER 17, 1858, THE RANA WORSHIPPED THE GODDESS AND THEN—
MY MEN, YOU HAVE STUCK TO ME THROUGH THICK AND THIN. I AM INDEBTED TO YOU FOR EVER.

BUT NOW THE ODDS ARE HEAVILY AGAINST US. SO, THOSE OF YOU WHO WANT TO GO BACK TO YOUR FAMILIES MAY DO SO.


NOT A SOUL MOVED.

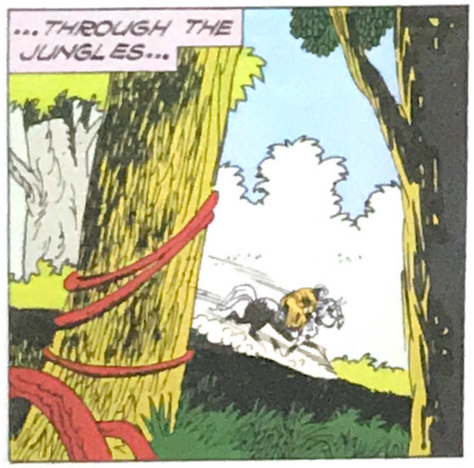
AND THEN—
WE ARE WITH YOU.
RANA BENI MADHO KI JAI!

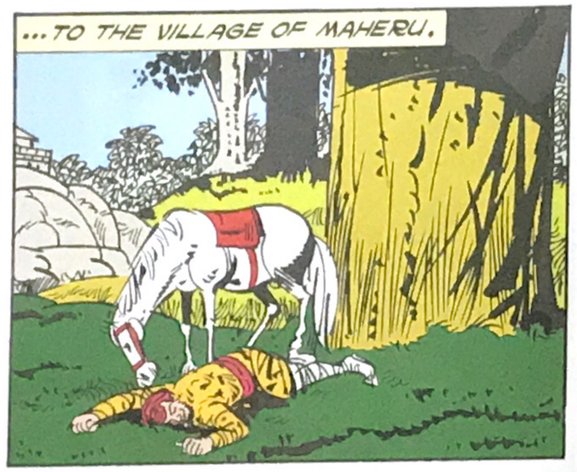
SOON—

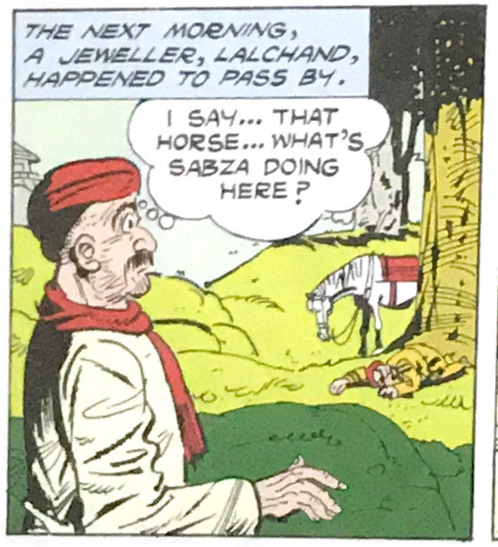
SUDDENLY—
THE RANA!
HE IS SURROUNDED!

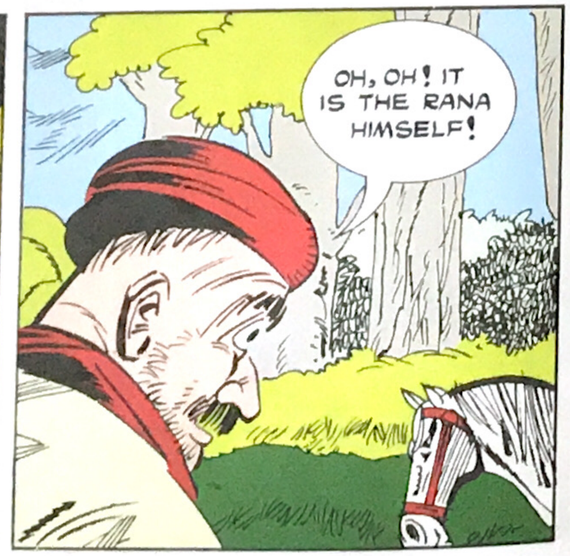
WITHIN SECONDS—
RANA SAHEB, YOU ARE WOUNDED! LEAVE THE FIELD!
NO...NO...! HOW COULD I...!
PLEASE, RANA SAHEB!

GO, SABZA! TAKE YOUR MASTER TO SAFETY.
THE FAITHFUL MOUNT PROMPTLY SPED AWAY...


...THROUGH THE JUNGLES...


...TO THE VILLAGE OF MAHERU.


THE NEXT MORNING, A JEWELLER, LALCHAND, HAPPENED TO PASS BY.
I SAY... THAT HORSE... WHAT'S SABZA DOING HERE?

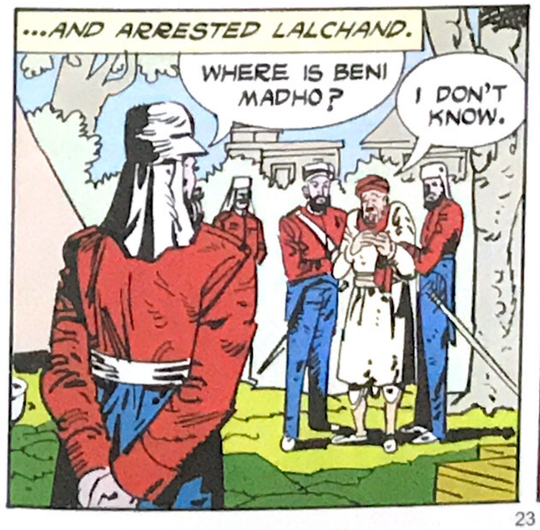

OH, OH! IT IS THE RANA HIMSELF!

LALCHAND JAUHARI TOOK THE WOUNDED RANA HOME...
...AND NURSED HIM BACK TO HEALTH.

A FEW DAYS LATER, AT LALCHAND JAUHARI'S HOUSE—
HOW IS THE RANA? CAN HE TRAVEL NOW?
YES, HE CAN.

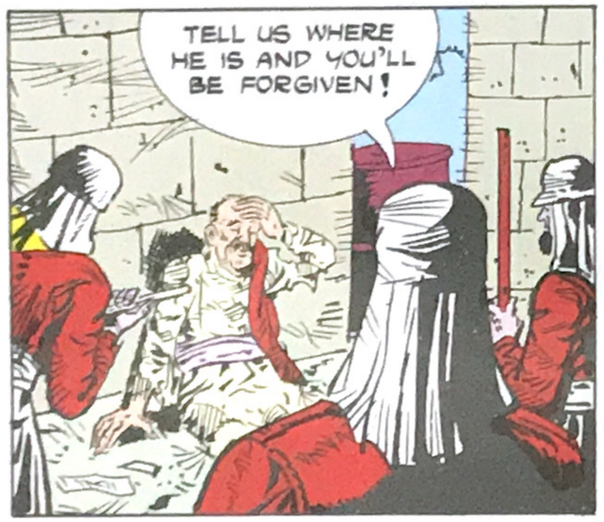
THANK YOU, LALCHAND. BUT TAKE CARE! THESE FOREIGNERS ARE VINDICTIVE.
DON'T YOU WORRY, RANA SAHEB.

HOT ON THE RANA'S TRAIL, BRIGADIER EVELEIGH REACHED MAHERU...


...AND ARRESTED LALCHAND.
WHERE IS BENI MADHO?
I DON'T KNOW.

YOU ROGUE! SPEAK UP! OR ELSE...!
I TOLD YOU I DON'T KNOW!

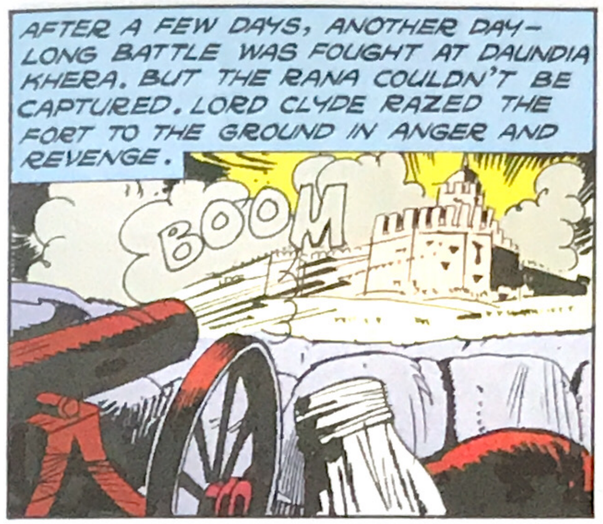
BUT HE STAYED WITH YOU, DIDN'T HE? YOU NURSED HIM BACK TO HEALTH!


TELL US WHERE HE IS AND YOU'LL BE FORGIVEN!

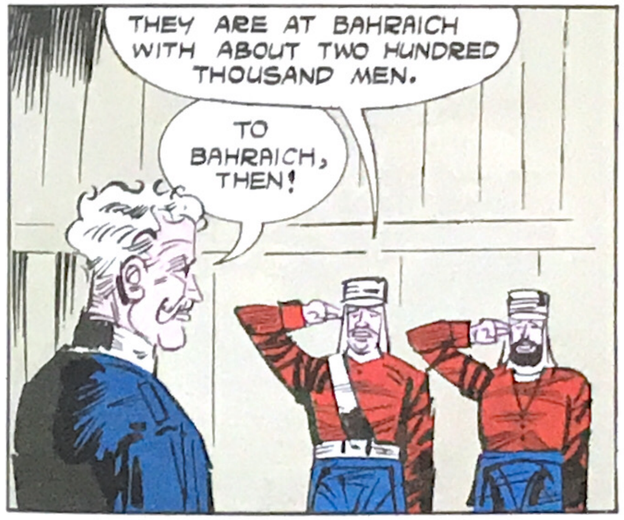
THE RANA MEANWHILE HAD REACHED DAUNDIA KHERA. SOME DAYS LATER—
HUZOOR, THEY HANGED POOR LALCHAND!
AND RAZED HIS HOUSE TO THE GROUND.

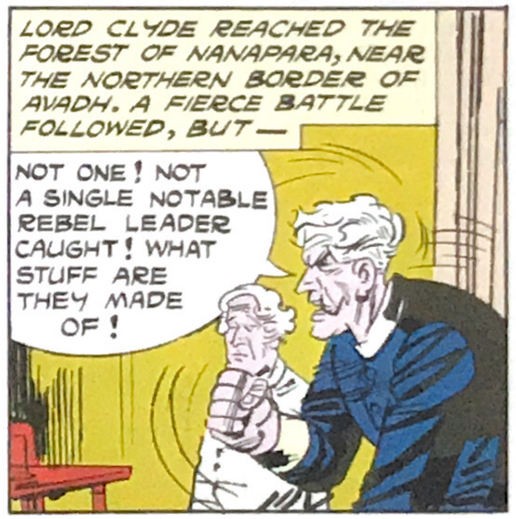
THEN ONE DAY A VISITOR CAME TO MEET HIM.
YOU ARE FIGHTING A LOSING BATTLE, RANA SAHEB. EVEN NOW IT'S NOT TOO LATE.
TOO LATE FOR WHAT?

TO SEEK PARDON. EVEN THE BEGUM IS FLEEING TO NEPAL.
THIS HEAD BOWS ONLY BEFORE GODDESS DURGA... OR MY KING!


AFTER A FEW DAYS, ANOTHER DAY-LONG BATTLE WAS FOUGHT AT DAUNDIA KHERA. BUT THE RANA COULDN'T BE CAPTURED. LORD CLYDE RAZED THE FORT TO THE GROUND IN ANGER AND REVENGE.
BOOM

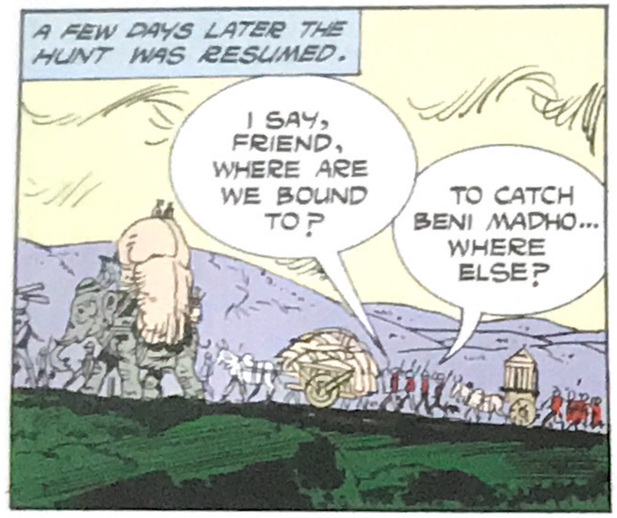
AFTER SOME TIME, THE SPIES BROUGHT NEWS.
SIR, THE BEGUM, NANA SAHEB, BENI MADHO ARE ALL ON THE RUN... TO NEPAL.


THEY ARE AT BAHRAICH WITH ABOUT TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN.
TO BAHRAICH, THEN!


LORD CLYDE REACHED THE FOREST OF NANAPARA, NEAR THE NORTHERN BORDER OF AVADH. A FIERCE BATTLE FOLLOWED, BUT—
NOT ONE! NOT A SINGLE NOTABLE REBEL LEADER CAUGHT! WHAT STUFF ARE THEY MADE OF!

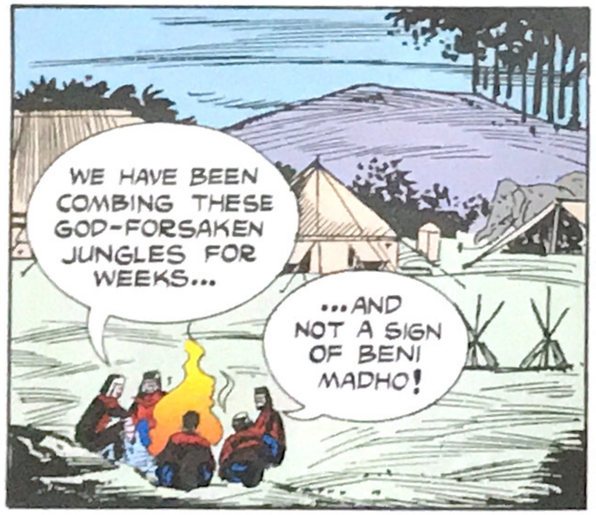
THE BRITISH PRESS IS AWARDING ME WITH SUPERLATIVES...!
LAST BLUNDER OF CLYDE

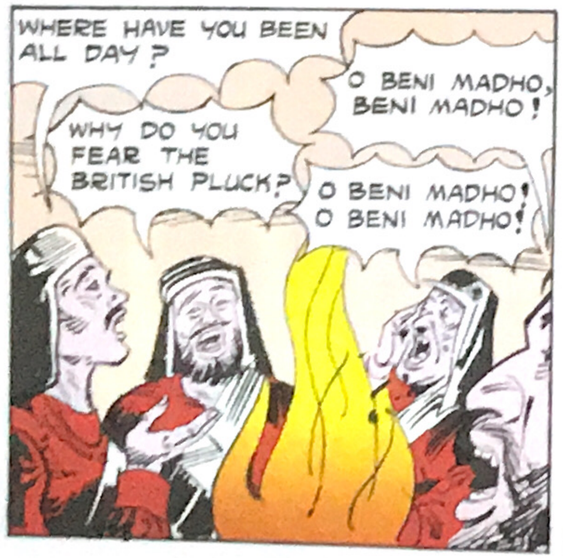
BENI MADHO... I'LL CATCH YOU YET... SOME DAY SOMEWHERE!

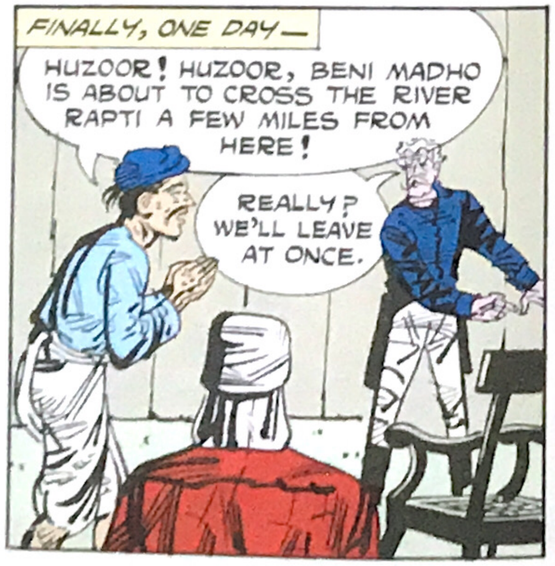

A FEW DAYS LATER THE HUNT WAS RESUMED.
I SAY, FRIEND, WHERE ARE WE BOUND TO?
TO CATCH BENI MADHO... WHERE ELSE?

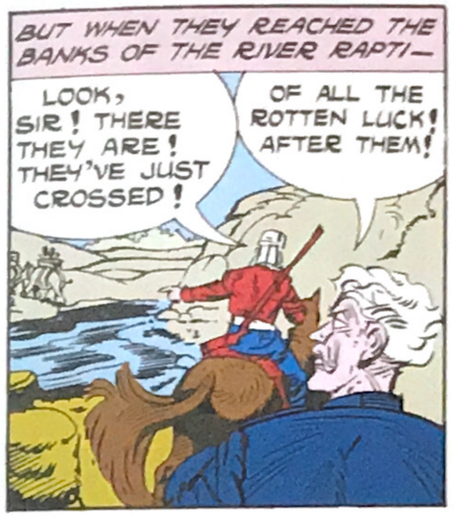
OH LORD! BUT... WHY SO MUCH FUSS OVER ONE CHAP?
BECAUSE HE IS THE MOST SLIPPERY OF ALL!

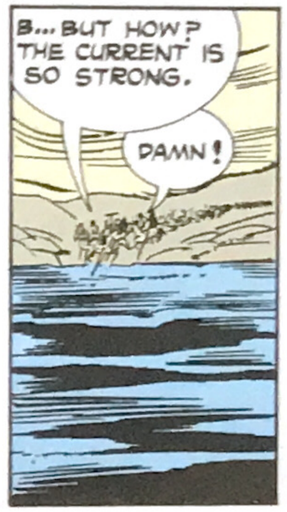
HOW I WISH WE COULD GO HOME! LET BENI MADHO GO WHERE HE WILL. DON'T YOU AGREE?
MOST HEARTILY. BUT... CLYDE DOESN'T.
WHERE, O WHERE ARE YOU? BENI MADHO, O BENI MADHO!


WE HAVE BEEN COMBING THESE GOD-FORSAKEN JUNGLES FOR WEEKS...
...AND NOT A SIGN OF BENI MADHO!


WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL DAY?
O BENI MADHO, BENI MADHO!
WHY DO YOU FEAR THE BRITISH PLUCK?
O BENI MADHO! O BENI MADHO!


FINALLY, ONE DAY—
HUZOOR! HUZOOR, BENI MADHO IS ABOUT TO CROSS THE RIVER RAPTI A FEW MILES FROM HERE!
REALLY? WE'LL LEAVE AT ONCE.

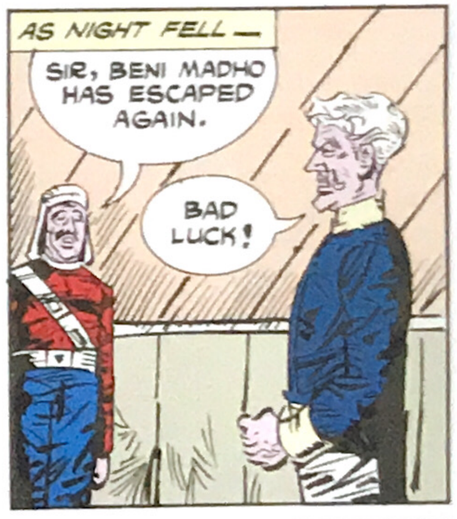

BUT WHEN THEY REACHED THE BANKS OF THE RIVER RAPTI—
LOOK, SIR! THERE THEY ARE! THEY'VE JUST CROSSED!
OF ALL THE ROTTEN LUCK! AFTER THEM!

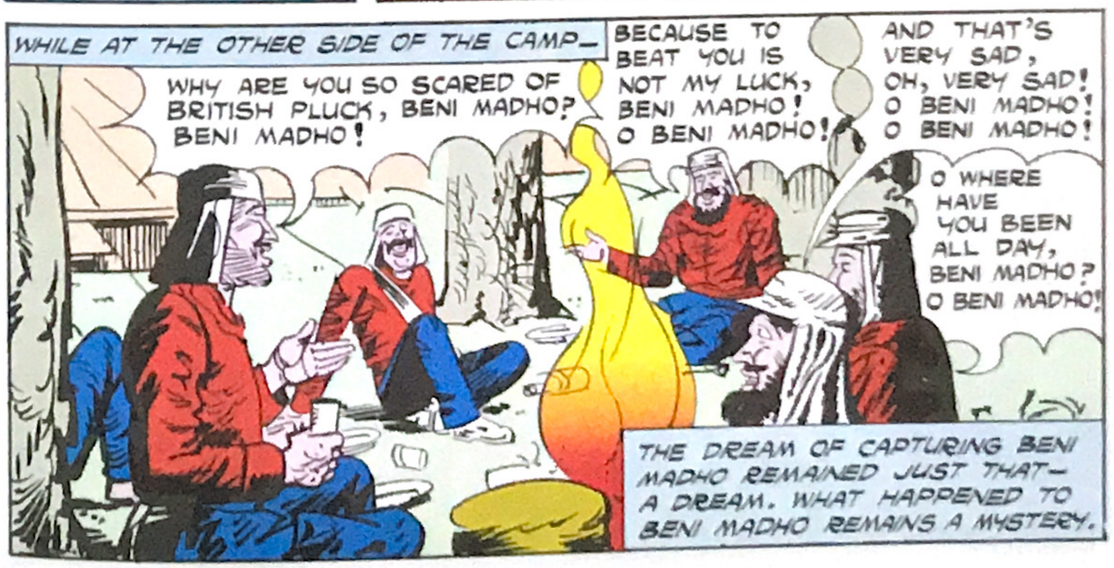

B... BUT HOW? THE CURRENT IS SO STRONG.
DAMN!

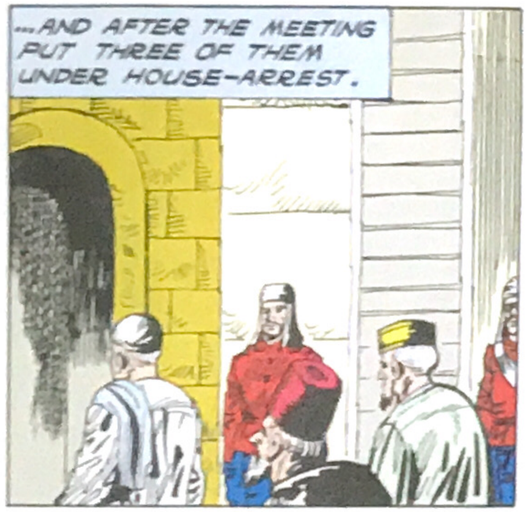
SIR... DON'T WORRY... WE'LL CATCH THEM YET!
HEY! WATCH OUT! STEADY! BOY, STEADY!

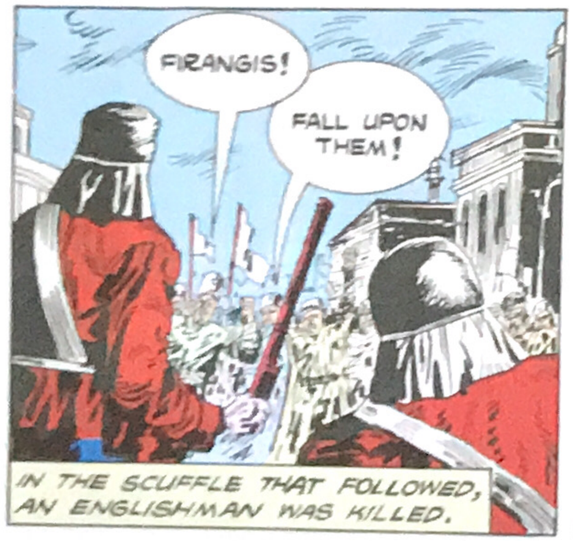
BUT—
A A A H!
BANG!
ZZZ

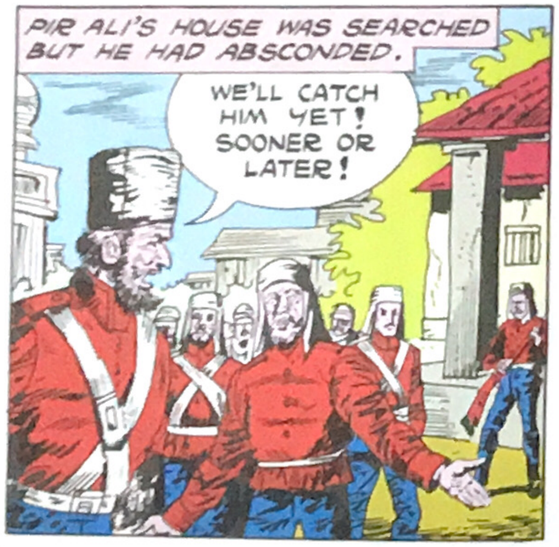
MAJOR HORNE! HE'S BEEN SWEPT AWAY!


AS NIGHT FELL—
SIR, BENI MADHO HAS ESCAPED AGAIN.
BAD LUCK!


WHILE AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CAMP—
WHY ARE YOU SO SCARED OF BRITISH PLUCK, BENI MADHO? BENI MADHO!
BECAUSE TO BEAT YOU IS NOT MY LUCK, BENI MADHO! O BENI MADHO!
AND THAT'S VERY SAD, OH, VERY SAD! O BENI MADHO! O BENI MADHO!
O WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL DAY, BENI MADHO? O BENI MADHO!
THE DREAM OF CAPTURING BENI MADHO REMAINED JUST THAT— A DREAM. WHAT HAPPENED TO BENI MADHO REMAINS A MYSTERY.







* POLICE-STATION

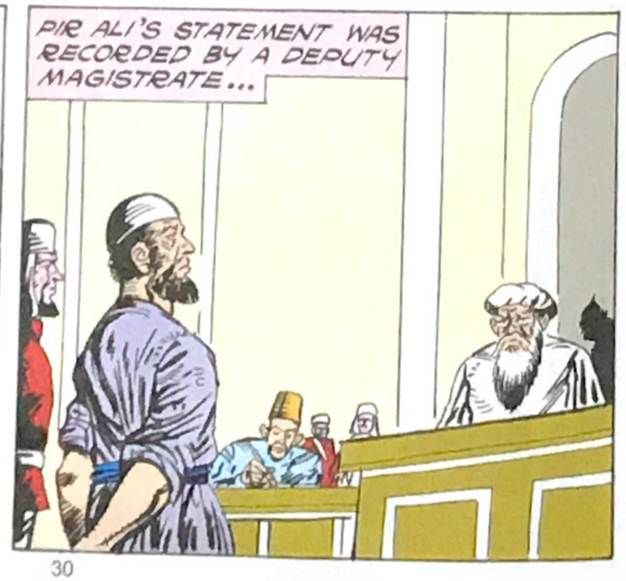
DON'T YOU DARE CALL ME THAT!

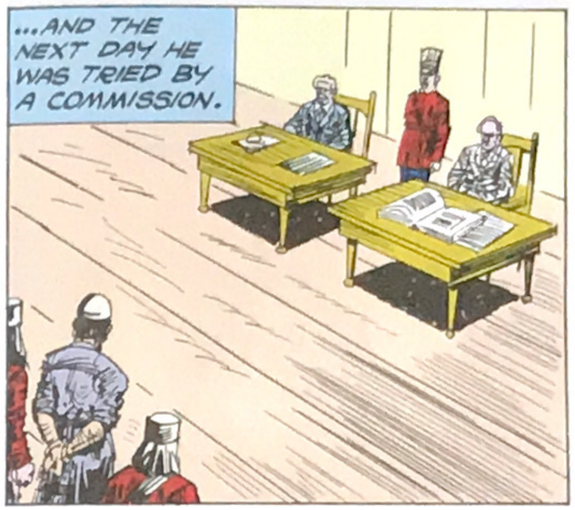
IT IS YOU AND YOUR FIRANGI MASTERS WHO ARE THIEVES!

THEY TOOK HIM TO THE POLICE CHOWKEE AT MUGHALPURA.
YOUR NAME?
PIR ALI KHAN.

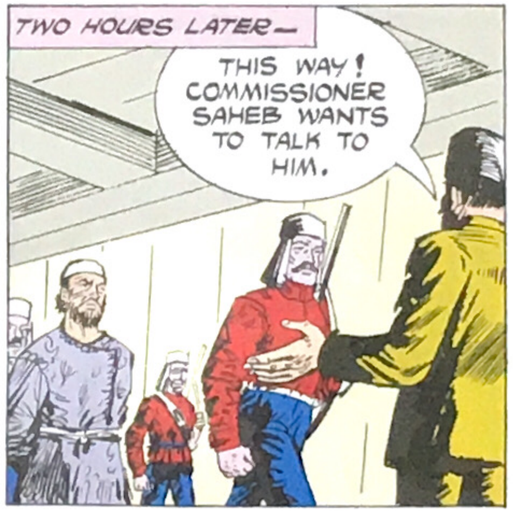
PROFESSION?
BOOKSELLER.

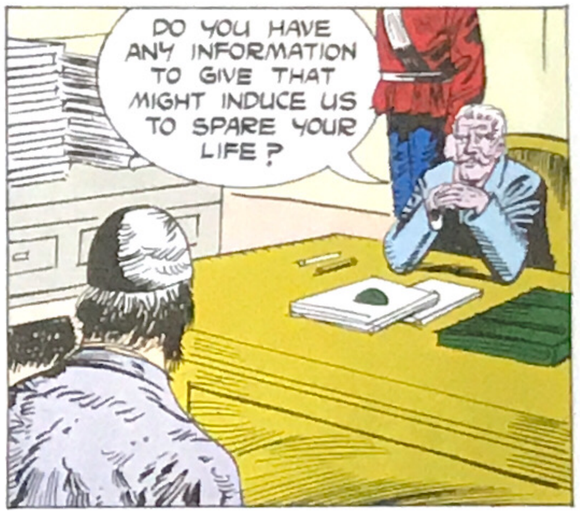
AHA! PIR ALI, THE BOOKSELLER! WHAT A CATCH!


PIR ALI'S STATEMENT WAS RECORDED BY A DEPUTY MAGISTRATE...


...AND THE NEXT DAY HE WAS TRIED BY A COMMISSION.

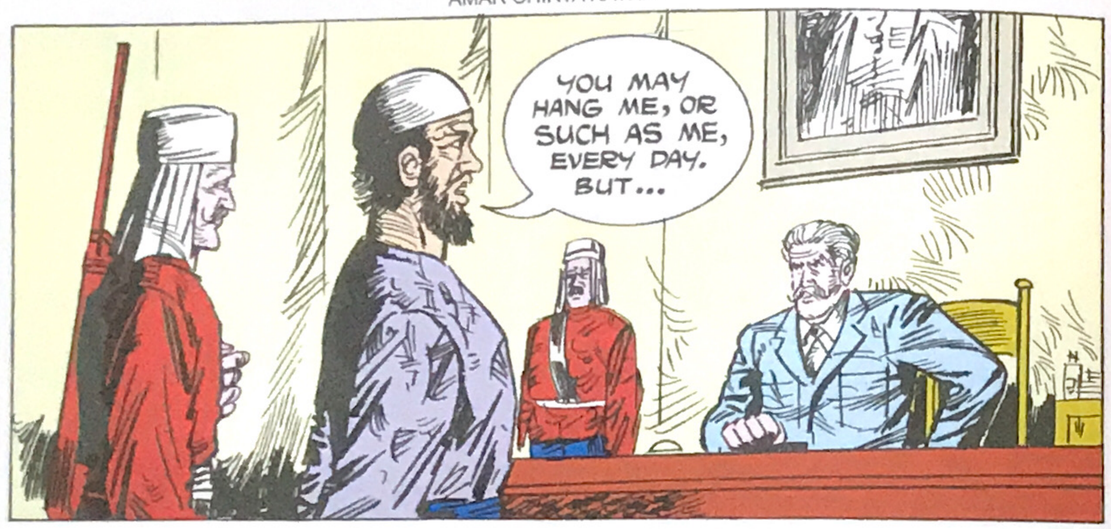
SOON AFTER—
DEFENDANT PIR ALI IS TO BE HANGED TILL DEAD.

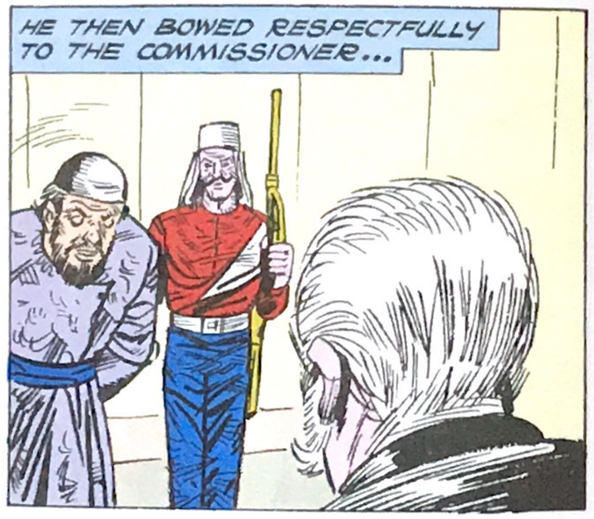

TWO HOURS LATER—
THIS WAY! COMMISSIONER SAHEB WANTS TO TALK TO HIM.

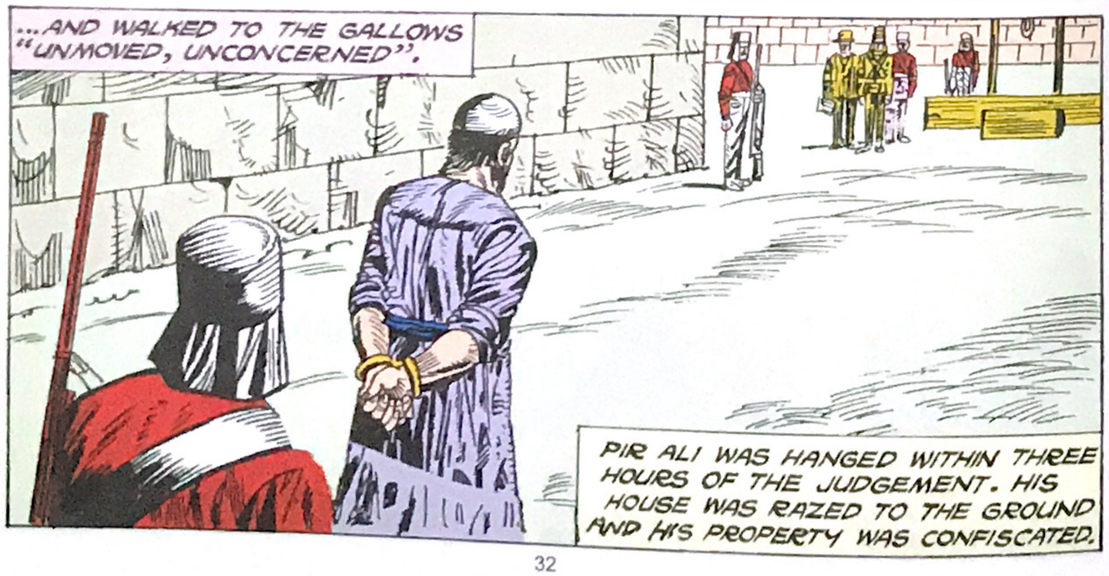

DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION TO GIVE THAT MIGHT INDUCE US TO SPARE YOUR LIFE?

THERE ARE SOME CASES IN WHICH IT IS GOOD TO SAVE LIFE...

...OTHERS IN WHICH IT IS BETTER TO TO LOSE IT, TAYLOR SAHEB.







WHICH OF THE ACKs HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

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